

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 26, 1907, with transcript

Original with Mr De Land Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. (Mabel's response to my proposition to decline the Honorary degree of Doctor of Science from Oxford University, A.G.B.) Keep Tuesday A.M. March 26, (1907)  
Alec dear:

All these honors that are coming to you now are very dear and precious to me. They mean a lot to me for they show that the appreciation of you, my dear one, is steadily growing and not declining as so often happens.

I was very much hurt and disappointed that Yale did not take advantage of her centenary to honor you, and that the city of Franklin passed you by in the same way. I should have always felt it, and been sore if Oxford had continued to ignore you as so far Cambridge has. My own feeling as you know is not a "sort of better late than never" one it is that the men of today, the babes and unborn children of 1876 are hastening from everywhere to do you honor. These young men with all their young enthusiasms fresh on them, eager as youth is to show its admiration for greatness are coming rushing to you with outstretched arms and shining eyes, and offering you from full hearts the very best they have to give, the very highest honor in their power, an honor that seems to them tremendous and awe-inspiring — and you want to push it aside and say, "No it wasn't give to me by your fathers and grandfathers thirty years ago and I won't take it now. Your love and admiration is nothing to me, is even contemptible in my eyes"!!

You who talk so much of not imputing motives, of putting the best interpretation upon the action of others!

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Oh Alec dear just think of things this hearty loving way, 2 and hold out your arms and say “Yes dear children I thank you for this proof of your love, I am deeply touched by it, and I will come to you since you want me, if I possibly can. I can't just now the more because your appreciation is stimulating me to finish other work on which I have been engaged for several years, and I want to show you that the man you honor and love is still capable of great work and even more worthy of your esteem than you know.

But if I possibly can get a couple of weeks off before June 22 to run over and shake you by the hand and meet you face to face I certainly will”!

Doesn't Casey's “love and devotion and belief in you touch you?” He is the first to come forward in a practical way to help you to carry on your present work, and it is his generation that is offering you these honors. It is his fellows that are doing what they can, all they can for you. It is they whose confidence and whose help you need and must have to carry on your own new work.

Just let your own loving heart have its way and accept what is offered in the same spirit in which it is given, and establish a strong bond of mutual friendship. “Thank you, you touch me and please me greatly, how come and encourage and help me to further effort,” how some such words from you will sink down in the hearts of these young men and boys and they will carry the memory of them and the gracious expression of you, with your beautiful silvery hair and bright eyes on with them to other generations yet unborn. What help and encouragement to them to see what a noble man it is 3 that afar off and unseeing they have admired.

Isn't this the large and loving and happy and truest view of things better than shutting yourself up alone without fellowship.

Weren't you touched when at the Peary banquet they turned and greeted your simple appearance with such hearty, spontaneous cheers, when at Amherst the young men gave

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you all they had to give. The doctorate may have been the action of the older men, but they seconded it with an enthusiasm which no member of the faculty could have forced from them.

Your wife, Mabel.